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# Scenic National Landscapes: Common Themes in Japan and the United States

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# Essays in Philosophy

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## Scenic National Landscapes: Common Themes in Japan and the United States

### Introduction

Landscapes often help characterize a country's national identity. Both in Japan and in the United States, landscape aesthetics has historically been motivated by each society's effort to develop nationalistic ethos and pride by overcoming their cultural indebtedness to China and to Europe respectively. In Japan this phenomenon is illustrated best by the three historically designated scenic places. I will first explore the landscape aesthetics specific to Japanese culture, exemplified by those scenic places, and its contribution to the formation of Japanese cultural identity. I will then compare this Japanese tradition to the American scenic landscapes, characterized by the early national parks, selected also for serving the nationalistic agenda. My primary purpose for examining landscape aesthetics in these two cultures is to explore the implications, sometimes problematic, of such a societal project for selecting certain scenic landscapes for popular appreciation.

### I. The Three Scenic Places of Japan: Description, History, and Aesthetics

Throughout its history, Japan has selected a certain group of landscapes and designated them as scenic places, always specified with the number of selected sites. They range from 100 scenic places of Edo (the old name for Tokyo), 53 stations along Tokaido (route from Edo to Kyoto), both depicted by Hiroshige, a nineteenth century woodblock print artist, 36 views of Mt. Fuji, illustrated by Hokusai, another nineteenth century woodblock print artist, to several sets of eight scenic places around various locales, such as Kyoto. Even today, one historian points out, "most localities in Japan are likely to have their own three or eight landscapes."<sup>1</sup> While each locale thus boasts its own scenic places, Japan as a whole had *its* own set of scenic places: *Nihon sankei* (three scenic places of Japan), so designated roughly four hundred years ago, though they have been celebrated throughout Japanese history.

Both interestingly and understandably, all three are coastal-scapes. Japanese landscape is dominated by coastal-scape, as well as mountain scape, because it consists of four main islands and 3,800 smaller islands, creating an extremely long coastline for a relatively small land area. It measures 33,000 km, roughly 90% of the United States' coastline, though the United States' land mass is twenty times more than that of Japan. This long coastline is due to the complicated, deeply chiseled zig-zag edges created by Japan's mountainous terrain which often comes right up to the shore or is submerged into the ocean.<sup>2</sup> The Japanese coast-scape includes all kinds of formations, ranging from deltas to peninsulas, bays to long stretches of straight beaches, sand dunes to bluffs, amusingly-shaped rocks to islands, with fjords being the only coastal form absent.<sup>3</sup>

Given this abundance of coastal-scapes, it is no wonder that the coast has dominated the traditional Japanese aesthetic appreciation of nature. According to one compilation of the subject matter of five major anthologies of poetry published between eighth and twelfth centuries, those topics related to the coast make up the highest number at 247, followed by those related to mountains at 223.

Together they make up about 87% of all the poetic subject matters.<sup>4</sup> The selection of three coastal scapes for defining the natural beauty of Japan, therefore, is no accident.

Let me first introduce these three places and their perceived aesthetic appeal. One is Matsushima, located in the bay of Matsushima, along the northeast coast of the mainland. It consists of 260 small islands adorned with pines, intricate shorelines, and strange and amusingly-shaped rocks. The geological form of this whole area is called rias, which resulted from the submergence of the Matsushima hills caused by a geological fault.

This scenic place has been celebrated throughout Japanese history. For example, a garden constructed in the ancient capital of Kyoto by a ninth century aristocrat included a miniature representation of Matsushima, along with the re-creation of the salt-burning cauldron with smoke.<sup>5</sup> It also provided a subject matter for noted painters, such as Tawaraya Sotatsu (mid-16th century - mid-17th century) and Ogata Korin (1658-1716). In the literary realm, a number of poems praising the beauty of Matsushima have also been composed since ancient times. In the seventeenth century, the haiku master Basho praised it as "the most beautiful scenery in Japan" which "wouldn't embarrass itself alongside Lake Tung-t'ing and Lake Hsi," famed scenic lakes in China.<sup>6</sup>

The second scenic place is Ama-no-hashidate (bridge over heaven), located on the Wakasa Bay, in the northwestern part of Kyoto prefecture, opening to the Sea of Japan. Ama-no-hashidate is a narrow and long sandbar, 2 miles long and 130 to 360 feet wide adorned with gnarled pine trees.

According to a legend, a famous ninth century poetess and her attendants traveled to this region from Kyoto. At one point, she had to answer the call of nature, left the group and squatted. While doing her business, she had an unusual upside-down view of Ama-no-hashidate through her widespread legs. The sandbar was transformed into a floating bridge in the sky. Based upon this legend, this custom of peeping through straddled legs became a popular practice, sometimes creating a debate as to the best spot for the most effective visual effect.<sup>7</sup>

As was the case with Matsushima, Ama-no-hashidate was also celebrated in various arts. For example, a ninth century aristocrat created a garden in Kyoto with "a long peninsula built in the garden lake, which was planted with pine trees, after the windswept, twisted trees at Amanohashidate."<sup>8</sup> This unusual spectacle was also reproduced in the imperial garden of Katsura, Kyoto, constructed in the seventeenth century. This coastal-scape also provided a popular subject matter for the visual arts, such as a fifteenth century brush ink painting by Sesshu and several nineteenth century woodblock prints by Hiroshige.

The last scenic place is Miyajima (literally meaning an island of shrine), or Itsukushima Shrine, located about 12 miles southwest of Hiroshima. Itsukushima consists of Mt. Misen covered by a virgin pine forest, a Shinto shrine structure at the foot of the mountain which forms an inlet, with a Torii gate in the water, and the inland sea between Miyajima island and the mainland.

The shrine, dedicated to three deities for fishing, assumed the present form in the latter part of the twelfth century under the patronage of the powerful Taira clan. Its design was derived from the hill-behind, pond-before garden for the aristocrats' residential structure, which in turn was modeled after a topographical feature similar to Itsukushima (mountain on the back, sloping down to the sea which is embraced by promontories creating a bay). In contrast to the other two scenic places that were appropriated and represented in gardens, Itsukushima presents the reverse process where the garden design is imposed upon the actual scenery.<sup>9</sup> The only difference between Itsukushima and the garden is the presence of torii gate in the water which, according to one commentator, "serves a valuable function aesthetically by bringing the entire seascape into sharp focus."<sup>10</sup>

Now that we have familiarized ourselves with the three traditional scenic places of Japan, I would first like to explore what particular attractions they share. The first thing to notice is that they are all coastal-scapes. Coastal-scapes are characterized by the meeting of two different elements: land and water. In general, land signifies that which is cultivated or cultivatable, while water indicates raw nature not amenable to cultivation.

Besides being coastal-scapes, these three scenic places are all bays rather than promontories, straight shorelines, or bluffs. According to one commentator, bay-scapes signify a geological form traditionally favored by the Japanese, called *zofu-tokusui*, which means storing wind and acquiring water. This designates either a tract of flat land embraced on three sides by elevated land, or an inlet with a small beach and elevated land on the back, with two sides enclosed by promontories.<sup>11</sup>

Several reasons have been offered for explaining the Japanese attraction to the bay as the most favored coastal topography. They range from its utilitarian value of offering a protected spot for port or refuge, the association with the feminine embrace, to the water functioning both as figure and ground according to Gestalt psychology.<sup>12</sup>

As for its purely aesthetic appeal, the concave curve of a bay calls attention to the relationship between the water and land, because its gentle embracing curvature always provides the view of both. A panorama consisting of both water and land, a bay-scape emphasizes, more than any other coastal-scapes, that the coast is a meeting place for these two elements; it calls attention to the border or edge between the land and the sea. In comparison, the convex curve or straight shoreline primarily affords us the view of a vast expanse of water with neither objects to indicate its scale or distance, nor land to soften the straight horizon.<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting to note in this regard that, in contrast to this predominant interest in the bay-scape, the Japanese aesthetic tradition has shown little interest in the vast expanse of the ocean itself. Japanese language has numerous words referring to various kinds of coast and water near the land, while there is only one term referring to the open sea, *oki*, the root of which is the same as *oku*, meaning the innermost space.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, Japan lacks sea literature "celebrating the magnificent splendor of open sea" or describing the exploration and adventure into the open sea.<sup>15</sup>

Despite its long tradition of the aesthetic appreciation of nature, the appreciation of the sublime never took hold in Japan. The preference for the bay-scape, where the vastness of the water becomes mitigated, is one example. The water is not regarded as a forbidding presence of

unfathomable depth; it is experienced rather as something more approachable. I believe this aesthetic preference for the aspects of nature which do not overwhelm us and are closer to the human scale reflects a fundamental Japanese belief concerning nature. According to it, nature is not "The Other" confronting us, sometimes challenging and threatening us, but rather it is our comrade with whom we can have an easy commerce.<sup>16</sup>

This Japanese view concerning the easy passage between raw nature (such as the ocean) and cultivated or cultivatable nature (such as land) is further emphasized in these three bay-scapes. In addition to calling attention to a harmonious, not confrontational, relationship between land and water, these bay-scapes emphasize how the boundary between water and the land is fuzzy and indeterminate. Strictly speaking, there is no definite shoreline in any coast that would correspond to the clearly delineated line on the map, because of the constant motion of the water. However, in case of these three examples, the additional elements of islands, a sandbar, or a gate complicate the respective bay-scape and soften the demarcation between land and the sea. Compared to other coastal-scapes, it is more difficult to determine where the land ends and where the water begins.

The obscuring of the edge between land and sea is also accomplished in these scenic sites by pine trees. They are spaced so that each pine tree can exhibit its own branch growth as well as allowing a glimpse of the water from the land, making the water appear alluring.<sup>17</sup> As one commentator points out, "the traditional Japanese depiction of the edge of water consists of subtle, yet intricate and interlacing, patterns of land and water, sandbank and islands, inviting the viewer on the shore or cliff to come forward, as well as small rocks, water plants, and birds scattered to make water appear inviting and enticing."<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, the preferred mode of depicting the edge of water in Japanese visual arts is to make it indeterminate through various means. Similarly, in the art of Japanese garden-making, the earliest eleventh century treatise instructs that "it is bad...to make the outline too neat" in representing a sandy beach.<sup>19</sup> One of the popular gardening techniques is called *nageshi* (flowing branch), which means training the pine branches on the shore of a garden pond to extend low and horizontally so that they help obscure the edge of the water while suggesting it.

This preference for edges or boundaries between two spatial elements which are blurred or obscured is prevalent in Japanese aesthetic taste. It is best illustrated by traditional architecture. Instead of regarding dwelling as an enclosed, walled-in space to protect the dweller from the hostile world outside, the Japanese regarded the dwelling as a space which flows freely into or from the outside, putting up temporary thin walls of paper or wood only for dire needs (such as keeping rain, wind, and robbers out).<sup>20</sup> The division between inner space and outer space is cushioned by a wall-less corridor with the end of the roof hanging over it. This verandah, opening toward the outer space, usually a garden, is regarded neither inside nor outside, or, conversely, both inside and outside.<sup>21</sup> This fuzzy edge between inside and outside is further enhanced by the careful arrangement of rocks and pebbles which mark the border of the garden.<sup>22</sup> These design features contribute toward avoiding a sudden, blunt, or abrupt transition. One architect characterizes this Japanese attitude toward spatial design as "spatial continuity" in contrast to "spatial confrontation" generally attributed to the Western design.<sup>23</sup>

There are many other spatial devices used in Japanese design which help blur the demarcation between two different spaces, facilitating a mutual interpenetration and easy transition between them. They range from *noren*, a hanging cloth outside of an entrance to a restaurant, to a gate leading to a shrine or a temple, to steps on the sea shore gently going down to the water. Various terms are used to describe these spaces, such as in-between space, gray space, intermediary space, transitional space, pivoting space, tertiary space, intervening space, or wrapping space,<sup>24</sup> these devices mediate between the two spaces and facilitate a smooth transition between them. Whether the contrast is outer and inner, public and private, sacred and profane, nature and culture, the Japanese preference is to experience these contrasting spaces not as wholly exclusive and independent of each other, but rather as flowing into each other. These spatial designs reflect the traditional Japanese belief that the two spaces are on a continuum, rather than discontinuous, opposing, or contrasting realities. The three bay-scapes under consideration can similarly be interpreted as providing a fuzzy cushioning area to mitigate the demarcation between land and sea, experienced as culture and nature.

## II. Scenic Landscape and National Identity: Japan and the United States

### i. The Case of Japan

These three scenic places historically played an important role in defining Japanese national identity, as well as in forming the Japanese attitude toward nature appreciation. Since ancient times, Japan perpetually imported culture from the Continent, namely China, including religions, political systems, language, city-planning, and various arts. Among those arts, garden and ink painting were particularly relevant to subsequent Japanese landscape appreciation. Various rules concerning garden making were derived from Chinese geomancy and even as late as the seventeenth century some gardens were designed to imitate Chinese scenic places. Similarly, Japanese brush ink paintings began as depictions of Chinese scenic sites. The so-called "eight scenic places of Hsiao Hsiang" (two rivers pouring into Lake Tung-t'ing in China) was such a popular subject matter that various Japanese locales came up with their own eight scenic places, either modeled after the Chinese landscape or in competition with them.<sup>25</sup> Recall Basho's remark concerning Matsushima that it "wouldn't embarrass itself alongside Lake Tung-t'ing and Lake Hsi."<sup>26</sup> Despite their Chinese origin, the art of garden-making and brush ink painting became Japanized through the increasing attention to and incorporation of Japanese native landscapes such as the three scenic sites. For example, while primarily a treatise on Chinese geomancy, the eleventh century discussion of garden-making suggests that the author "visit(ed) ... many provinces" and "noted in several occasions that ... (he) was deeply impressed by the excellence of a certain scenic beauty."

He subsequently recommends garden-makers to "think over the famous places of scenic beauty throughout the land, and ... design (their) garden with the mood of harmony, modelling after the general air of such places."<sup>27</sup> As we have seen, scenic places like Ama-no-Hashidate and Matsushima provided such inspirations.

The Japanization of scenic appreciation also owes its development to the literary device of *utamakura*, which is translated as "a place of poetical association" or "a place famed in poetry." Since ancient times, a poetic association has become established between a certain place in Japan and what it's noted for, such as the coast of Miho with *hakusha-seisho* (white sand with dark green pine trees) to the point where they became inseparable. As a result, various scenic sites throughout



Japan praised in *utamakura* became established as formulaic, stylized images through repeated reference in literary arts. The popularity of these Japanese scenic places was further enhanced by *michiyuki-bun*, a lyric, and sometimes imaginary, travelogue describing the scenery along the way, composed primarily with *utamakura*. This literary genre helped both confirm and enhance the pre-established image of scenic sites.<sup>28</sup>

These literary conventions, frequently illustrated with woodblock prints, made traveling a popular form of pilgrimage for visiting those famous sites between seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The scenic sites were thus experienced through conventional literary and visual images, which largely determined the content of the viewers' experience, regardless of their firsthand impression.

*ii. The Case of the United States*

We can find a similar project of nationalizing landscape appreciation in the United States, although its history is much shorter and more recent than Japan's. As many scholars, particularly Roderick Nash, document, early settlers' attitude toward what appeared to them as uncultivated "wilderness" was negative, partly because of the overwhelming obstacles to be overcome for sheer survival.<sup>29</sup> The other factors contributing to this negative attitude toward wilderness came from the European intellectual tradition at the time. For one, raw nature was regarded as worthless "waste" until it is cultivated and worked on by humans, John Locke being the most prominent spokesperson for this view.<sup>30</sup> This utilitarian consideration affected the prevailing European aesthetic taste until the development of the new aesthetic categories of the sublime and the picturesque during the course of the eighteenth century. Geometrical regularity, orderliness and neatness, characteristic of cultivated land, such as farms and orchards, were considered more beautiful than disorderly, chaotic, messy wilderness.<sup>31</sup>

When survival in the wilderness was no longer a pressing concern, Americans' attitude toward their land became more positive. However, in an interesting parallel to the earlier attitude toward the (literally) uncultivated land, Americans had to contend with another sense in which their land was uncultivated: lack of associations. Nineteenth century American landscape appreciation borrowed extensively from the prevailing European aesthetic theory, an outgrowth of the picturesque aesthetics and the foundation of romanticism, which locates the aesthetic value of an object in the series of associated ideas it triggers. The following claim by Archibald Alison, a late eighteenth century British aesthetician, best characterizes this associationist aesthetic theory:

When any object, either of sublimity or beauty, is presented to the mind, I believe every man is conscious of a train of thought being immediately awakened in his imagination, analogous to the character or expression of the original object.<sup>32</sup>

For example, according to Alison, the valley of Vacluse (residence of Petrarch), the field of Agincourt, and the Rubicon derive their respective aesthetic value from historical associations, while other places may be "embellished and made scared by the memory of Theocritus and Virgil, and Milton and Tasso." These associations, whether historical or literary, beautify the landscapes which "themselves may be little beautiful."

European landscapes, on this aesthetic theory, are thus easily appreciable because of the long

history associated with them. American landscapes, on the other hand, according to the nineteenth century interpretation, were considered devoid of equivalent associations. This comparison created a great deal of anxiety and inferiority complex among the nineteenth century American intellectuals. To cite only a few examples, Thomas Cole claims that many people judge American scenery to be inferior to European scenery because of the former's "want of associations, such as arise amid the scenes of the old world."<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Sarah Hale laments that American landscape on the whole is dull to our fancy because of "the barrenness, the vacancy, painfully felt by the traveller of taste and sentiment," which "arises from the want of intellectual and poetic associations with the scenery he beholds."<sup>34</sup>

What interests me here is that some aspects of the American landscape appreciation familiar to us today came out of the various strategies proposed as remedies for this alleged lack of associations. One was to provide such associations by creating various stories attributable to some specific landscapes. The literary works of Washington Irving and J. Fennimore Cooper were especially instrumental in establishing some associations for American scenery in order to make it "the great theater of human events."<sup>35</sup>

The second strategy was to refer people's imagination to the potential of future economic development of the site. The scenery may be uncultivated, primitive, uncouth, and rough at the moment. However, looking at such scenery, Thomas Cole claims: "the mind's eye may see far into futurity. Where the wolf roams, the plough shall glisten; on the gray crag shall rise temple and tower -- mighty deeds shall be done in the now pathless wilderness; and people yet unborn shall sanctify the soil."<sup>36</sup> This sentiment is shared by N. P. Willis who appreciates the future landscapes at Caldwell on Lake George, consisting of "the smiling scenes of agriculture,"<sup>37</sup> despite the alleged lack of beauty at that time.

Where the Americans could claim superiority of their landscape to European landscape, however, was considered to be in the immensity, both temporal and spatial, of the former. By expanding the notion of historical associations to include natural history, American landscape can boast advantage over European human history. For example, one explorer/surveyor points out that the Sierra redwoods "began to grow before the Christian era," while another writer informs the readers that the trees "were of very substantial size when David danced before the ark, when Solomon laid the foundations of the Temple, when Theseus ruled in Athens, when Aeneas fled from the burning wreck of vanquished Troy."<sup>38</sup>

This temporal immensity associated with American landscape is matched by spatial enormity. Niagara Falls are stupendous, unparalleled by any falls worldwide; the summits, gorges, falls, of the Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada supercede those found in Europe, the Alps in particular; various natural curiosities situated in Yellowstone, such as geysers and hot springs, surpass similar phenomena found elsewhere in size and might.<sup>39</sup> As one person declares, "in grand natural curiosities and wonders, all other countries combined fall far below it."<sup>40</sup> The final remedy for the American landscapes' lack of associations was to turn this supposed disadvantage into a virtue: the celebration of American wilderness precisely because of their untouched status, both literally and conceptually. For example, Thomas Cole declares: "the most



distinctive, and perhaps the most impressive, characteristic of American scenery is its wildness." Somewhat surprisingly, the same sentiment is expressed by Goethe in his advice to American writers and painters, that they should devise their own artistic style suited for their land, unburdened by the European tradition:

American, you're better off than  
Our continent, the old.  
You have no castles which are fallen  
No basalt to behold.  
You're not disturbed within your inmost being  
Right up till today's daily life  
By useless remembering  
And unrewarding strife...[42](#)

All of these appreciations of American landscape were thus a part of the cultural project to define its own identity, in particular by distinguishing itself from the old world, to which the young nation was indebted in many respects, including the aesthetic sensibility. This self-imposed pressure to come up with what is distinctly American about its landscape and what makes it superior to the rest of the world is one factor that contributed to the formation of the national park system, the first of its kind in the world. It is no accident that the first areas to be designated as national park, Yosemite and Yellowstone, are characterized by the size, age, and might of their geological wonders, as well as their (presumed) wilderness.[43](#)

While separated geographically and historically, the Japanese and American appreciations of their respective landscape are comparable in two respects: (1) they both resulted from a conscious effort to formulate their own national identity by overcoming their indebtedness to another culture, and (2) they selected certain scenic places, such as the Japanese scenic sites and American national parks, to form the image of national identity.[44](#)

### III. Problems of Scenic Landscape Appreciation

While the celebration of selected scenic landscapes in both nations contributed toward defining the respective national identity, it also created some problematic consequences. First, the popularity of these scenic landscapes often leads to an assumption that only those and similar landscapes are aesthetically valuable. Second, because these scenic landscapes are primarily situated in areas far from our living and working environments, we tend to expect that only travel destinations offer aesthetically appreciable landscape. Consequently, local, lived landscapes, unlike those popularized sceneries, are considered unscenic or uninteresting, and become neglected in our aesthetic consciousness. There are several problems with these implications of scenic landscape appreciation, both Japanese and American, and I would like to explore four criticisms in particular: aesthetic, humanistic, ecological, and pragmatic.

#### *i. Aesthetic Criticism*

The first criticism regards the impoverishment of our aesthetic experience. For example, Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), a noted Japanese ethonologist, who developed a view on landscape appreciation

based upon his historical and anthropological research,<sup>45</sup> claims that the Japanese scenic appreciation "restricts" our fresh impressions in several ways.<sup>46</sup> First, it confines our experience of scenery to exclusively visual and stationary appreciation. Similar to the contemporary criticism of the legacy of the picturesque appreciation in the West, he points out the following:

just like food, landscape possesses taste in addition to color and form; furthermore, it also includes various unforgettable fragrance and sound. Once confined into a flat, stationary plane, flying and moving objects (such as birds, animals and insects) immediately became eliminated from it. They became extinct long before their actual demise.<sup>47</sup>

Second, the superiority of certain landscapes, such as "the three scenic spots and the eight scenic views of Lake Biwa" was "established and guided by the cultural elites."<sup>48</sup> As such, this artistic tradition sometimes overrides our genuine reaction. It leads us to believe that a certain landscape "cannot be of poor quality because it has been repeatedly praised by numerous poets and painters."<sup>49</sup> Conversely, we are led to believe that *only* those landscapes praised in the literary and visual arts are worthy of appreciation.

However, Yanagita points out that many parts of Japan, besides those scenic places, have traditionally been appreciated. They are often local landscapes, farm-scapes, or seascapes, experienced primarily by residents such as farmers and fishermen. They experience their own surroundings as a "lived environment," *in* which they live, *on* which they work and *with* which they interact, rather than as a scenery to be beheld from afar or through an artistic medium. However, these people, illiterate for the most part, did not have the means of articulating and expressing their appreciation of their environment in artistic forms, literary or visual. Nor did they need to, because, for example, "though the farmers clearly experienced the beauty of the soybean field, they did not have a need to describe this experience in detail because their whole community shared this feeling in the first place."<sup>50</sup> Such feelings are frequently embodied in songs to accompany work and folklore.

Yanagita compares this situation to our understanding of history. Contrary to the popular tendency to treat history as consisting of extraordinary events and persons, such as wars and kings, he points out that it is more importantly constituted by common folks in their daily activities. Similarly, there are numerous landscapes other than those traditionally celebrated ones that are experienced daily by residents, the beauty of which has neither been popularized nor articulated.

A similar problem with the American scenic aesthetics is pointed out by Aldo Leopold. "Concerned for the most part with show pieces," he claims, we are "willing to be herded through 'scenic' places" and "find mountains grand if they be proper mountains with waterfalls, cliffs, and lakes."<sup>51</sup> As a result, we find the Kansas plains "tedious" and the prairies of Iowa and southern Wisconsin boring.

Half a century before, John Muir also complains that the two artists he met on Mt. Ritter were satisfied only with a few scenic spots offering spectacular, startling views, while finding surrounding meadows and bogs "sadly disappointing" for not making "effective pictures."<sup>52</sup> A

contemporary painter also laments that we have not cultivated "an ability to see beauty in (such) more modest, less aggressive settings."<sup>53</sup>

## *ii. Humanistic Criticism*

The foregoing criticism of Yanagita regarding the cultural hierarchy as it relates to the landscape appreciation leads to the next set of criticisms: what I would call humanistic criticism. According to Yanagita, these established scenic sites tend to confine scenic beauty to travel destinations that we "visit" or "pay homage to" as "outsiders" or "non-residents." However, travelers' appreciation tends to miss or misinterpret the significance of certain kinds of scenery. For example, visitors from the outside cannot experience the pathos associated with the full-grown soybean field, felt by farmers in anticipation of the forthcoming long, hard winter, expressed in their folksong.<sup>54</sup> Or consider another case of a typical scenic view of an island which, "after the Matsushima style," has "rocky shores adorned by green pine trees drooping over the water which are further decorated by white wreaths formed by broken waves around the branches," sometimes affording a glimpse of "red azaleas ... in the spring." However, this scenic beauty results from the crumbling of granite that signifies the death of agriculture, which in turn indicates the increased hardship for the islanders' lives. On the other hand, a rather flat island that is managing to sustain agriculture gives the onlooker a desolate impression because its shores crawl out to the sea. Geologically and agriculturally speaking, the first island-scape is on its last legs while the second is in the process of growth, but pictorially only the former receives attention and praise.<sup>55</sup>

Yanagita criticizes the visitors' landscape appreciation not only for misinterpreting what they see, but also for being "ego-centric." That is, their neglect of what the scenery means to the residents can border on disrespect, because either they are enjoying the scenery, which may signal hardship to the residents, or they are depreciating the scenery which symbolizes the residents' proud achievement. The point is not to put exclusive value on the residents' experience of their island-scape; rather, the visitors must be willing and open-minded enough to share in and sympathize with the residents' joy and sorrow.<sup>56</sup>

We find a similar humanistic concern expressed by William James in his well-known anecdote regarding "coves," heads of small valleys that he encountered in North Carolina. The charred stumps of the cut trees were left there, younger trees were planted irregularly, and the log cabins built with the cut trees looked miserable. To James, an outsider passing by, this sight was "one of unmitigated squalor," until one of the resident mountaineers told him that they were proud of the coves under cultivations; the coves to the residents "spoke of honest sweat, persistent toil and final reward." According to James' own interpretation of this experience, "the spectator's judgment is sure to miss the root of the matter, and to possess no worth." What otherwise might be "a mere ugly picture on the retina" is really to be looked at and appreciated as "a symbol redolent with moral memories" and "a very paean of duty, struggle, and success."<sup>57</sup>

The difference between the travelers'/visitors' interpretation and appreciation of a landscape and those of the residents/insiders has been a frequent subject matter for discussion among cultural geographers, as well as among aestheticians. On the one hand are supporters of the strictly formalist appreciation of landscape with exclusive attention on its sensuous surface. They claim that the

residents/insiders too familiar with the landscape's often non-perceptual significance, such as historical, sociological, political, and economic associations, tend to become blind to its sensory qualities. On the other hand are critics like Yanagita and James, who remind us that the purely sensuous appearance of a landscape does not tell a full story about itself. I believe both are correct in their claim. However, problems arise if one puts exclusive emphasis on one or the other aspect of the landscape. It is not that James should totally discount his initial, naive reaction to the coves after learning their significance. Rather, what I believe makes a rewarding aesthetic experience is to enrich the initial appearance of the landscape by merging what he learned, so that the clumsy-looking coves now appear symbolic of conscientious and industrious work, which probably would not be captured (or at least expressed differently) if various elements are slick-looking and neatly arranged. The humanistic criticism, such as offered by Yanagita and James, however, does serve as an effective corrective to the prevailing scenic landscape appreciation focusing exclusively upon the sensuous surface.

iii. *Ecological Criticism*

If the visitor's or traveler's interpretation of a landscape tends to miss its humanistic dimension, it may also misinterpret or neglect its ecological implications as well. Many contemporary critics of scenic landscape appreciation are particularly concerned to point out that those landscapes not satisfying the established criteria of scenic beauty do often possess ecological riches, which need to be incorporated into their aesthetic values. At the same time, some scenic landscapes, in particular those created by humans, may be problematic from the ecological point of view. The former examples range from landscapes with a maggot-infested elk carcass, beetles, weeds, burnt forest, dead and down trees, to prairie, wetland, jungle, and desert.<sup>58</sup> The prime example for the latter would include park-like landscaping with green meadow and dotted trees in areas unsuitable for these vegetations, the maintenance of which hence requiring the use of scarce water and various chemicals for fertilizer, herbicide, and insecticide.<sup>59</sup>

Aldo Leopold, therefore, promotes ecologically-informed land aesthetic, corollary to his well-known land ethic. It should be based upon "a refined taste in natural objects" through training in nature study, a departure from what he calls "under-aged esthetics," which "limits the definition of 'scenery' to lakes and pine trees."<sup>60</sup> To those with this "under-aged esthetics," typically laymen and tourists, "much of the damage inflicted on land is quite *invisible*." For example, the slow but progressive deterioration of the Southwestern soil is "quite invisible to the tourist who find this wrecked landscape colorful and charming." In contrast, although "invisible and incomprehensible" at first, the appropriate scientific knowledge brings "a change in the mental eye," enabling us to decipher and appreciate the "marsh-land chorus," "the song of a river," "the speech of hills," which is "a vast pulsing harmony -- its score inscribed on a thousand hills, its notes the lives and deaths of plants and animals, its rhythms spanning the seconds and the centuries," and "the incredible intricacies of the plant and animal community -- the intrinsic beauty of the organism called America."

We can illustrate how (under-aged) scenic landscape aesthetics can be guided toward ecologically-based aesthetics by our long-held, negative attitude toward wetlands. In addition to their presumed lack of practical and economic values and the associated darkness, danger, and discomfort, an important factor contributing to their negative image is the absence of scenic beauty. Enlightened by

what ecological sciences teach us, however, we are now aware of at least two dozen functions, ranging from purifying water, controlling flood and stabilizing the local and global climate, to providing habitat for many plants, birds, animals, fish, and micro-organism. Armed with such knowledge, the seemingly plain and monotonous appearance of a salt marsh, for example, either changes or thickens. It may change because some features or characteristics we hadn't noticed before become prominent, such as the way in which plant zones are distinctly ordered rather than intertwined, corresponding to the saline and oxygen content of the environment. Or the appearance may thicken because our experience negotiates between its seemingly simplistic facade and its very complex mechanism that facilitates its sustenance and function as a bio-community through the balance of competition and cooperation among its members.<sup>61</sup>

*iv. Pragmatic Criticism*

Now one may say that our possible moral shortcomings for not sympathizing with the residents' experience and our ignorance or neglect of ecological dimension of landscapes are truly problematic and should be corrected, but aesthetics has nothing to do with it. The problem is our failure to acknowledge our fellow citizenship in a larger human, as well as ecological, community. We can cultivate moral sensibility and ecological literacy while maintaining our aesthetic attraction to scenic landscapes and indifference to unscenic landscapes.

Though I don't think there is a logical or theoretical inseparability between our aesthetic sensibility and the moral and ecological implications, both the Japanese and American cases suggest *pragmatic* inseparability. Our scenic landscape aesthetics inclines us not only to celebrate but also to *protect* scenic sites while neglecting unscenic places. The perceived lack of aesthetic values in unscenic, unattractive, or uninteresting parts of nature, often our everyday environment, marginalizes them in our ecological consciousness. Regarding the American situation, Arnold Berleant articulates the problem:

The United States has preserved many of its natural wonders in a fine national park system, but these temples of nature are rarely a part of the ordinary landscape of daily life. Visiting them usually requires a long journey to unfamiliar regions. For most people, the lived, the living landscape is the commonplace setting of everyday life, and how we engage with the prosaic landscapes of home, work, local travel, and recreation is an important measure of the quality of our lives.<sup>62</sup>

Because our everyday environment does not stand out like scenic travel destinations, it becomes neglected in our aesthetic life, deemed not worthy of or relevant to aesthetic considerations, hence not deserving our interest or attention, let alone protection.

*Theoretically*, we should be able to develop a morally responsible attitude toward our land purely through ecological understanding and the Kantian sense of duty (if we expand the ethical domain to include nature). But psychologically and pragmatically, when it comes to land, I think Aldo Leopold is right when he declares that "we can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love" and that it is "inconceivable... that an ethical relation to land can exist without love, respect, and admiration for land, and a high regard for its value."<sup>63</sup> This affectionate attachment to land, according to him, is most readily facilitated by our aesthetic appreciation.

Indeed for him land aesthetic and land ethic are inseparable; hence the well known "key-log" of land ethic states: "Examine each question in terms of what is ethically *and esthetically* right... A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, *and beauty* of the biotic community."<sup>64</sup>

Bringing our discussion back to Japan, it is noteworthy that the pragmatic implications of *its* scenic aesthetics also concerns the neglect of ecological considerations. According to one social scientist's empirical research on people's attitude toward nature in several countries, the Japanese stand out for their general dismissal of those parts of nature not popularized in the collective (literary and artistic) consciousness:

Most of the respondents indicated the Japanese tend to place greatest emphasis on the experience and enjoyment of nature in highly structured circumstances. The objective, as one informant suggested, was to capture the presumed essence of a natural object by adhering to strict rules of seeing and experiencing intended to best express the centrally valued feature. Rarely did this admiration extend beyond single species or particular landscapes to a broad appreciation of the natural world or the ecological processes associated with it. Environmental features falling outside the especially valued aesthetic and symbolic boundaries of preferred natural objects tended to be ignored, judged irrelevant, or perceived as unappealing. This restricted appreciation of nature was described by many informants as largely emotional with little ecological or biological basis... Many respondents suggested a Japanese motivation to touch nature from a safe distance or, ...to isolate favored environmental features and 'freeze and put walls around them.'<sup>65</sup>

The consequences of the Japanese neglect of everyday environment, particularly in comparison with the three scenic places, are most clearly seen in what has been happening to Japan's coastline in recent years, mudflat and tidal flat in particular. Consider the following statistics. In 1975, Japan already ranked number one in the length of artificial coast; in 1982, the artificial coasts measured 8369 km, more than one quarter of the total coastline, and, according to the 1995 prediction issued by the Ministry of Construction, the natural coast of Japan will all but disappear in the next 125 years. Since the end of the World War II, 40% of mudflats and tidal flats have disappeared, primarily due to landfills or reclamation by drainage to gain more land for agricultural and industrial uses. After two decades, beginning in the 1960's, approximately 20,000 hectares of new land were created in Tokyo Bay alone and 30,000 hectares along the Inland Sea, where Miyajima is located. Tokyo Bay may all but disappear if the further landfill plan gets carried out in its entirety. In the mean time, Hachirogata, a large brackish water lake in the northwestern part of the mainland, no longer exists through the largest reclamation project.<sup>66</sup>

Now some changes are necessary and not all changes are ecologically or aesthetically undesirable, but many of these modifications in the coastal areas result from industrialization and commercialization imposed upon by entrepreneurs and government officials, who are not themselves directly affected by the changing environment. These projects invariably pit residents against the developers.

To cite a few examples, the proposed gigantic oil refinery construction in Shibushi Bay would



destroy the beauty of its coastal areas. The plan to widen the Western end, Subo-nada, of Honshu by 10 km would make the strait of Kammon narrower. Furthermore, a series of high-rise hotels and resort facilities have been constructed, encouraged by the resort law (which promotes the development of resorts) backed by the bubble economy of the 80's. Perhaps its most notorious product is the gigantic indoor simulated beach called Sea-Gaia on the Nichinan Shore of Kyushu, renowned for its coastal beauty.<sup>67</sup> The most recent and well-publicized case concerns the flood gate, dike, and land reclaimed by drainage constructed in Isahaya Bay, also in Kyushu. In addition to the ecological devastation of various sea creatures, including mudskippers whose only Japanese habitat is in this bay, the project was initially decried by the residents who objected to the guillotine-like appearance of the dike.<sup>68</sup> At present the local residents suffer from the near total decimation of seaweed industry, their most important livelihood.<sup>69</sup>

As an indication of some hope, many of these cases ended up in court litigation brought about by the residents or grass-roots protest and opposition movements, rather unusual phenomena in the Japanese society generally known for its anti-litigious and acquiescent attitude. These cases also underscore the importance and foresight of Yanagita's plea that we pay attention and respect to the residents' experiences of their landscape.

Conclusion

In both Japan and the United States, the selection of scenic landscapes was primarily motivated by the nationalistic effort to emerge from the shadow of the culture to which each society was indebted, China and Europe respectively, and to define their own cultural identity. As such, these scenic landscapes helped instill national pride as well as cultivating their own aesthetic sensibility. However, the price both nations paid for developing scenic landscape appreciation is the neglect of everyday environment, as well as the local residents' experience. This neglect results in an impoverishment, both aesthetically and ecologically, of everyday landscape that affects our life more profoundly and constantly than the distant scenic places.

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Notes

1. Edwin O. Reischauer, *The Japanese* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 10. The significance of the numbers three and eight are as follows: "three" takes after the three scenic places of Japan which I will discuss in this section. "Eight" refers to the eight scenic places around Lake Hsiao Hsiang in China, for which Japan was compelled to find its own substitute. See note 25 below.
2. A detailed discussion on this point can be found in Nakamura Yoshio's *Fukeigaku Nyumon (Introduction to the Study of Landscape)*, (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1984), p. 32. In accordance with the Japanese custom, I will place the Japanese author's last name first and the first name last whose book was published in Japanese, as in this case. As for Japanese authors whose book was published in English and non-Japanese authors whose book was published in Japanese, I will follow the English custom.

3. A detailed discussion on this point can be found in p. 59 of Augustin Berque's *Fudo no Nihon: Shizen to Bunka no Tsutai* (translation of *le Sauvage et l'artifice: les Japonais Devant la Nature*), tr. by Shinoda Katsuhide (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1991).
4. Higuchi Tadahiko, *Nihon no Keikan: Furusato no Genkei (Landscape of Japan: Prototype of Hometown)* (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1993), pp. 153-4.
5. The discussion of this garden can be found in Berque, *Fudo*, p. 79 and Mark Holborn, *The Ocean in the Sand - Japan: From Landscape to Garden* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1978), p. 36.
6. *Basho's Narrow Road*, tr. by Hiroaki Sato (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1996), pp. 79-81.
7. Ashihara Yoshinobu, *Zoku Machinami no Bigaku (Aesthetics of Townscape II)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), pp. 65-74. This manipulation of seeing a landscape reminds us of the way in which the eighteenth century British picturesque travellers used to see landscapes reflected onto a Claude glass.
8. Holborn, *Ocean*, pp. 36-7. This garden is also discussed by Nakamura, *Fukeigaku*, p. 76.
9. This reversal of appropriation/representation is referred to as *gyaku mitate* (where *gyaku* means reverse and *mitate* refers to the act of appropriating and representing nature in the form of art) and is discussed more fully by Nakamura, *Fukeigaku*, p. 76.
10. Yoshinobu Ashihara, *The Aesthetic Townscape*, tr. by Lynne E. Riggs (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), p. 103.
11. This type of landscape is discussed in detail by Tadahiko Higuchi in *The Visual and Spatial Structure of Landscapes*, tr. by Charles S. Terry (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983).
12. One commentator on Japanese literature documents that even among contemporary Japanese writers who are generally cynical and critical, the edge of a bay holds a special attraction. Many of their characters typically come back to a bay to seek comfort, relief, and peacefulness. He likens the experience of being embraced by the land at the bay to being comforted in a cradle. Okuno Takeo, *'Ma' no Kozo (Structure of 'Ma')* (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1987), p. 332. The application of Gestalt psychology is explored by Ashihara in *Zoku*, pp. 64-74.
13. See chapter 4 of Ashihara's *The Aesthetic Townscape* for a discussion and illustrations concerning this point.
14. See p. 329 and p. 333 of Okuno, *Ma*.
15. Pointed out by Yanagita Kunio in his *Mame no Ha to Taiyo (Leaves of Beans and the Sun)* (Tokyo: Sogensha, 1942), p. 203.
16. I explored this Japanese tendency to regard and appreciate nature as something akin to humans in "The Japanese Appreciation of Nature," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 25, Summer 1985: 239-51, and "The Japanese Love of Nature: A Paradox," *Landscape*, 31, 1991: 1-8. In

my discussion, I stress that the Western notion of the sublime, whether according to Burke or Kant, is premised upon the perceived opposition between humans and nature.

17. See pp. 69-70 of Nakamura, *Fukeigaku*.

18. Yanagita Kunio, *Meiji Taisho shi Sesohen (Lives during the Meiji and Taisho Periods)* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1967), p. 102. Nakamura also discusses the appeal of having a glimpse of a castle through pine trees in *Fukeigaku*, p. 110. Also see Toshi Ikagawa's "A Nostalgic Landscape of Japan: White Sand & Blue Pines" in *Landscape*, 32, 1993: 1-7.

19. Tachibana-no-Toshitsuna, *Sakuteiki: The Book of Garden*, originally written around 11th century, tr. by Shigemaru Shimoyama (Tokyo: Town & City Planners, Inc., 1985), p. 11.

20. See chapter 1 of Ashihara's *The Aesthetic Townscape*. A student in my mini-seminar on everyday aesthetics held at the University of Helsinki (Spring 2001), Nathalie Aubret, contrasted this aesthetics of *ma* with massive doors characteristic of Finnish architecture and attributed the difference to climate.

21. See in particular "A Culture of Grays" by Kisho Kurokawa, *The Japan Architect*, June 1979, p. 9, and *The Elegant Japanese House: Traditional Sukiya Architecture* by Teiji Itoh (New York: Walker/Weatherhill, 1969), pp. 158-9.

22. A photograph I took to illustrate this point accompanies my article entitled "Japanese Gardens: The Art of Improving Nature" in *Chanoyu Quarterly: Tea and the Arts of Japan*, 83, 1996: 40-61.

23. Kisho Kurokawa, "Rikyu Gray and the Art of Ambiguity," *The Japan Architect*, June 1979, p. 27.

24. Gray space, transitional space, tertiary space, intervening space, and intermediary space are terms used by Kisho Kurokawa in both *Rikyu* and *Culture*. Pivoting space is the term used by Itoh in *Elegant* and a number of other writings. In-between space is the term used by Richard B. Pilgrim in "Intervals (*Ma*) in Space and Time: Foundations for a Religio-Aesthetic Paradigm in Japan," *History of Religion*, 25, 1986: 255-277. Wrapping space is the term used by Joy Hendry in *Wrapping Culture: Politeness, Presentation, and Power in Japan and Other Societies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). In this work, Hendry gives a good analysis of a variety of examples that she considers to be a variation on the "wrapping" phenomenon. As for this spatial concept applied to city planning, see Fumihiko Maki's discussion on "Japanese City Spaces and the Concept of *Oku*," *The Japan Architect*, 264, 1979: 50-62. Good visual images of *noren* can be seen in *The Design Heritage of Noren: Traditional Japanese Storefront Art* by Tadashi Masuda (Tokyo: Graphic-sha, 1989).

25. To give a few examples, there are "Saga Hakkei" (eight scenic places of Saga - an area of Kyoto), "Omi Hakkei" (eight scenic places of Omi - an area near Kyoto), "Kanazawa Hakkei" (eight scenic places of Kanazawa - an old city on the Japan Sea coast). This proliferation of scenic places, consciously developed in comparison with Chinese eight scenic places, is discussed by Berque in *Fudo*, p. 80, *Nihon no Fukei, Seio no Keikan (Japanese*

*Scenery, Western Landscape*), tr. from French by Katsuhide Hinoda (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1990), p. 48, and by Nakamura in *Fukeigaku*, p. 77, 95. There is also an interesting story related to the establishment of "Nihon Hakkei" (eight scenic places of Japan) that was established in 1927. It was based upon the popularity vote among the readers of major newspapers. Its purpose was to commemorate the beginning of the Showa era (1926) by celebrating the truly domestic landscape as well as modernizing the concept of scenic beauty. The popularity and celebration of these eight scenic places were short-lived, however, because of the ensuing political upheaval that eventually led Japan to the war. In addition, some of these scenic places were absorbed into the national park system that was established in 1931. See "'Nihon Hakkei' Seisui" (Birth and Death of 'Eight Scenic Places of Japan') by Kuroiwa Takeshi in *Nihon Hakken: Mizuumi to Keikoku (Discover Japan: Lake and Valley)* (Tokyo: Akatsuki Kyoiku Tosho, 1982), pp.46-52.

26. Sato, *Basho*, p. 79.

27. Tachibana-no-Toshitsuna, *Sakuteiki*, p. 32 and p. 1. Also see Holborn, *Ocean*, p. 36.

28. Berque, *Nihon no Fukei*, p. 46.

29. Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982, third ed.). Another good source is Hans Huth's *Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972).

30. John Locke's theory of property has many references to the notion of "wasteland," by which he meant America. In particular, see sections 37, 41, 42, 43 of his *Second Treatise of Government*, originally published in 1690 (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980).

31. For this aesthetic taste, see the chapter on "The Human Dilemma" of Keith Thomas' *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

32. Archibald Alison, *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (Dublin, 1790), p. 2. The following quoted passages are from pp. 39-40 and p. 15.

33. Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," first appeared in *The American Monthly Magazine*, I (January 1836), included in *The American Landscape*, ed. by John Conron (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 570.

34. Sarah Hale, "The Romance of Traveling," in *Traits of American Life* (Philadelphia: E. L. Carey & A. Hart, 1835), pp. 189-90. The passage continues:

Genius has not consecrated our mountains, making them high places from which the mind may see the horizon of thought widening and expanding around, over past ages, -- they are nothing but huge piles of earth and rocks, covered with blighted firs and fern; the song has not named our streams -- they are only celebrated for affording fine fish, good mill-seats or safe navigation. No fairies nor lovers have made our valleys their places of resort; neither green rings or flowery

arbours have been allotted to the one or the other; but fertile meadows and fair fields are famed for affording the cultivator very profitable crops. It is therefore that, though reason sees and acknowledges the abundance afforded by our soil, yet fancy calls it barren; and European travelers, accustomed to a land where every place and object has its real or romantic legend, would pronounce a tour of the United States insufferably dull, and its inhabitants destitute of taste.

35. Cole, *Essay*, p. 571.

36. Cole, *Essay*, pp. 577-578.

37. N. P. Willis, *American Scenery; or, Land, Lake and River Illustrations of Transatlantic Nature* (originally published in London, 1840; Barre: Imprint Society, 1971), p. 104.

38. Clarence King, *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Co., 1872), pp. 41-43, cited by Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987, second ed.), p. 22.

39. These and other examples are given by Runte in his *National Parks*, pp. 38-39.

40. Albert D. Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1867), p. i, cited by Runte in his *National Parks*, p. 22.

41. Cole, *Essay*, p. 571.

42. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Die Vereinigten Staaten," *Samtliche Werke* (Jubilaums-Ausgabe; 40 vols.; Stuttgart and Berlin: Cotta, 1902-1907), IV. Gedichte (Zahme Xenien), 127; English trans. by Stephen Spender in *The Permanent Goethe*, ed. Thomas Mann (New York: Dial, 1948), p. 655, cited by Hans Huth in *Nature*, p. 50.

43. Alfred Runte's *National Parks* gives an excellent historical account of the establishment of the American national park system, with all its political, social, ecological, and aesthetic ramifications. The notion of wilderness as it applies to national parks needs to be qualified because what may have appeared as untouched wilderness to those who discovered these Western lands had in fact been managed carefully by native Americans, such as with periodic fire to maintain the forest growth. For this point, see Kenneth R. Olwig's "Reinventing Common Nature: Yosemite and Mount Rushmore -- A Meandering Tale of a Double Nature" in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. by William Cronon (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996).

44. I am not sure how prevalent this kind of project is of using scenic landscapes to help overcome a society's cultural indebtedness to another and to formulate its own national identity. I will mention, but will not pursue, two other instances. One is the British effort to overcome its cultural indebtedness to the Continent by Anglocizing its landscape appreciation during the course of the eighteenth century. Influential critics like Addison and Tickell urged the British poets to get away from associating the landscape values to references from Greco-Roman antiquity. One example of such a move is the two versions of *Elegy in a Country*



*Churchyard* by Thomas Gray. Earlier version makes reference to Cato, Caesar, and Cicero, while the latter version replaces them with Hampden, Cromwell, and Milton. The popularity of the picturesque travel within the British isles during the latter part of the eighteenth century can also be explained partly by its competition to the Grand Tour.

Another example actually comes from Japan, after the Westernization began in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The national identity characterized by the scenic places, like the ones I have discussed, was threatened again when the flood of Western (primarily European) ideas started pouring in after Japan opened its doors, closed to the outside for two and half centuries. After a period of embracing everything Western, including the mountain climbing promoted by a Brit, Walter Weston (who came to Japan in 1889), as well as naming the mountain range in the middle of the mainland "Japanese Alps" (the name still in use today), nationalistic sentiment to reject the Western influence developed. In terms of landscape appreciation, Shiga Shigetaka's *Nihon Fukei Ron (Theory of Japanese Landscape)*, published in 1895, is representative of this nationalistic tendency. One specific example to illustrate this is his praise of colorful Japanese autumn due to maple leaves, which he claims is superior to British autumn praised by Wordsworth and Scott (p. 30 of 1976 edition, published by Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo).

45. I learned the importance and relevance of Yanagita's work on landscape appreciation from Sato Kenji's *Fukei no Seisan, Fukei no Kaiho: Media no Arukeorogi (Production of Landscape, Liberation of Landscape: Archaeology of Media)* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1994).

46. Yanagita, *Mame*, p. 242, p. 254, p. 255, *Meiji*, p. 100.

47. *Meiji*, pp. 122-24. There are many writings criticizing the exclusive emphasis on the visual in the Western landscape appreciation. For one representative example, see Catherine M. Howett's "Where the One-Eyed Man is King: The Tyranny of Visual and Formalist Values in Evaluating Landscapes" in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. by Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

48. Yanagita, *Mame*, p. 290, p. 254.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 253. Indeed there were some people who thought that the scenic value of these three places was overrated. Omachi Keigetsu, for example, confesses his disappointment at finally seeing Ama-no-Hashidate in "Miyazu in Tango," included in *Meiji Kiko Bungaku shu (Anthology of Travel Literature from Meiji Period)*, Vol. 94 of *Meiji Bungaku Zenshu (Complete Works of Literature from Meiji Period)* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1974), p. 177.

50. Yanagita, *Mame*, p. 5.

51. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), pp. 193, 179-80. The following reference to the Kansas plains is from p. 180 and the prairies of Iowa and Wisconsin, from p. 193.

52. John Muir, *The Mountains of California*, first published in 1894, included in Conron, *The American Landscape*, p. 255.



53. Alan Gussow, "Beauty in the Landscape: an Ecological Viewpoint" in *The Landscape in America*, ed. by George F. Thompson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), p. 231.

54. Yanagita, *Mame*, p. 6.

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 221-3, p. 227.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 206, pp. 230-1.

57. William James, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings" in *Talks to Teachers* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915), pp. 231-234.

58. These examples are compiled from Leopold's *Sand County*; Neil Evernden, "Beauty and Nothingness: Prairie as Failed Resource," *Landscape*, 27, 1983: 1-8; Allen Carlson, "Nature and Positive Aesthetics," *Environmental Ethics*, 6, 1984: 5-34; J. Baird Callicott, "The Land Aesthetic," in *Companion to A Sand County Almanac*, ed. by J. Baird Callicott (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987); Holmes Rolston, III *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in the Natural World* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); Pamela Jones, *Just Weeds: History, Myths and Uses* (Shelburne, Vt.: Chapters Publishing Ltd., 1994); Marcia Muelder Eaton, "The Beauty That Requires Health," in *Placing Nature: Culture and Landscape Ecology*, ed. by Joan Iverson Nassauer (Washington, D. C.: Island Press, 1997); Joan Iverson Nassauer, "Cultural Sustainability: Aligning Aesthetics and Ecology," in *Placing Nature*; Yuriko Saito, "The Aesthetics of Unscenic Nature," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 56, 1998: 101-111; and Paul H. Gobster, "An Ecological Aesthetic for Forest Landscape Management," *Landscape Journal*, 18, 1999: 54-64.

59. For a discussion of this point, see John Tillman Lyle's "Landscape: Source of Life or Liability" in *Reshaping the Built Environment: Ecology, Ethics, and Economics*, ed. by Charles J. Kibert (Washington, D. C.: Island Press, 1999).

60. Leopold, *Sand County*, p. 194, p. 268. All the citations for the rest of this paragraph come from the same source: invisible damage, p. 197, emphasis added; Southwest, p. 242; a change in the mental eye, p. 291; marshland, p. 171; river, hills, and harmony, p. 158; America, p. 291.

61. The sorry history of the American attitude toward and treatment of its wetlands is documented in *Discovering the Unknown Landscape: A History of America's Wetlands* by Ann Vileisis (Washington, D. C.: Island Press, 1997).

62. Arnold Berleant, *Living in the Landscape: Toward an Aesthetics of Environment* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), pp. 15-6.

63. Leopold, *Sand County*, pp. 251, 261. The next quoted passage is from p. 262, emphasis added.

64. The inseparability of respect for the land and its aesthetic value is stressed by native American writers writing about their traditional beliefs and practices. For example, N. Scott

Momaday explains that "it is this notion of the appropriate, along with that of the beautiful, that forms the Native American perspective on the land. In a sense these considerations are *indivisible*." (p. 255, emphasis added, of "A First American's View" included in *Environmental Ethics: Divergence and Convergence*, ed. by Richard G. Botzler and Susan J. Armstrong (New York: McGraw Hill, 1998, second ed.))

65. Stephen R. Kellert, "Concepts of Nature East and West," in *Reinventing Nature? Responses to Postmodern Deconstruction*, ed. by Michael E. Soule & Gary Lease (Washington D. C.: Island Press, 1995), pp. 112-5, emphasis added. A similar observation is made by Mark Brazil in "The Wildlife of Japan: A 20th-Century Naturalist's View," *Japan Quarterly*, July-Sept, 1992: 328-38.

66. See a feature article on the protection of mudflats and tidal flats in *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* (*Japan Economics Newspaper*), June 25, 2001.

67. These examples are compiled from Berque's *Fudo*, as well as from Numata Makoto's *Shizen Hogo to iu Shiso* (*The Philosophy of the Protection of Nature*) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995).

68. *Asahi Shinbun* (*Asahi Newspaper*), July 8, 1997.

69. The photographs of some of these places and projects can be found in Yahagi Toshihiko's *Shin Nippon Hyakkei* (*The New One Hundred Scenic Landscapes of Japan*) (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1995). This is primarily a collection of one hundred photographs of devastated landscapes of contemporary Japan, and the ironic twist of its title is particularly effective, given the tradition of scenic landscape aesthetics that I have discussed in this paper.